



City Of Detroit Department Of Transportation



**Proposed Disabled Fare Change
And
Public Involvement Plan
June 2004**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	4
Disabled Special fare Cards.....	4
Public Involvement.....	5
PROPOSED DISABLED FARE RESTORATION.....	6
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN.....	7
Why Public Involvement is Necessary.....	7
When Public Involvement is Necessary.....	7
How The Public is Included in the Process.....	7
What Level of Participation/Involvement is Appropriate.....	8
Which Public Should be Involved.....	8
Goal No. 1.....	9
Goal No. 2.....	10
Goal No. 3.....	11
Goal No. 4.....	12
PUBLIC HEARING POLICY AND PROCEDURE.....	13
Location.....	14
Notification.....	14
Conducting a Hearing.....	15
Printed Material/Services for Public Hearing.....	16
Public Hearing Process.....	16
Service Changes.....	17
DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION	
Detroit Department of Transportation.....	17
Detroit Public Library, all branches.....	18
Detroit Neighborhood City Halls.....	18
Community-Based Organizations.....	18

DETROIT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

**PROPOSED CHANGES REGARDING RESTORATION OF THE HALF-FARE PROGRAM FOR THE
DISABLED AND REVIEW PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

Public hearings will be held by the Detroit Department of Transportation on

**THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 2004 at 10:00 AM and at 5:00 PM
AT DETROIT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, MAIN OFFICE
1301 E. WARREN (between I-75 and Russell)**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2004 at 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM
AT GOODWILL INDUSTRIES, 3111 GRAND RIVER
(between Elm and Brooklyn)**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2004 at 5:00 PM
AT BUTZEL FAMILY CENTER, 7737 KERCHEVAL
(between Van Dyke & Seyburn)**

to discuss and seek public input on proposed restoration of the Disabled Fare Program in accordance to the Federal Transit Administration guidelines. The proposed fare is half of the regular adult fare (or 75 cents and 10 cents for a transfer). Currently, any disabled passenger with a Medicare card and state issued identification card is allowed to ride public transportation at half fare. The proposed change would eliminate the F.R.E.I. (fare reduction elimination initiative) program, under which, disabled passengers are allowed to ride DDOT service at no charge.

DDOT also seeks public input and discussion on public involvement programs. Public involvement is a mandate of Federal, State, and City governments. Public involvement helps to guide department decisions on projects and services. Details of the official hearing document may be reviewed on DDOT's website www.detroit.mi.gov/ddot and is available at the Detroit Public Library and Neighborhood City Hall.

You may present your view(s) on transportation projects by attending these meetings or by writing to this office no later than 4:00 p.m. Monday, June 28, 2004: Detroit Department of Transportation, Grants, Planning & Marketing Division, 1301 E. Warren, Detroit, MI 48201. You may fax your comments to (313) 833-5493 or e-mail them to: calman@ddot.ci.detroit.mi.us.

Special accommodations for the hearing impaired, visually impaired, and others with disabilities should be made 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Please call (313) 833-7693 to make your request or the TDD/TTY number (313) 834-3434 for the hearing impaired.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Disabled Special Fare Cards

The Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) is proposing to restore a fare policy for disabled passengers. In 1999, the fare structure for seniors and disabled passengers was changed. Seniors paid a one-way fare of twenty-five cents and disabled passengers paid a half fare of sixty cents. These passengers were allowed to pay a reduced fare if they possessed the proper DDOT or DDOT/SMART special fare identification card.

The fare policy for senior and disabled passengers changed with the passing of the Fare Reduction Elimination Initiative (F.R.E.I.) program. This fare policy change allowed senior and disabled passengers (who were Detroit residents) to ride DDOT at no charge (free). Again, these passengers had to obtain the proper identification card in order to advantage of the free services.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations require that all federally funded, public transportation systems must (at a minimum) allow citizens, who have a Medicare card, ride their service for half fare – during off peak service hours. Under this regulation, DDOT allowed passengers, with Medicare cards, to ride at half fare during all service hours.

The implementation of a free fare program led to a substantial increase in the number of passengers seeking to obtain the special fare card. The special fare cards were processed by SMART and could be used on both transit systems. However, SMART riders were still obligated to pay a half fare. SMART reported an overwhelming increase in the number of applications for the special fare card. Applications increased from approximately ten (10) per week to over 200 per month. SMART had to re-evaluate the approval procedures and staffing needs to process the increasing number of applications.

It was determined by SMART and DDOT that there was an increase in fraudulent behavior to obtain the special fare card. Applications were being altered, causing SMART to no longer accept photocopied applications. The special fare cards were also being altered, which led to an increase in the number of cards confiscated by DDOT bus drivers.

DDOT addressed the program abuse by taking on the responsibility of issuing the special fare cards for Detroit residents only. DDOT began the yearlong process to recertify all current special fare card holders (Detroit residents). At the beginning of the process, DDOT received a database from SMART containing the names of over 30,000 Detroit residents with a special fare card. At the end of the process, DDOT was able to reduce the number of special fare cards issued by approximately two-thirds or 11,000.

DDOT is now forced to evaluate the impact of continuing to provide free service.

Public Involvement

DDOT has involved the public in the planning process for a number of years. In 1994, DDOT began to hold regular customer meetings, where the public was invited to meet DDOT management staff and to discuss their concerns with public transportation. The State Public Act 51 mandates that state funded transportation agencies must create a local advisory board consisting of members of the disabled and senior communities. The Federal Transit Administration also mandates that federally funded transportation agencies allow public input on capital projects and major service changes.

Recently, the public has requested that they be allowed to have input into the development of a Public Involvement Plan. A mandate from the Detroit City Council has required DDOT to provide a Public Involvement Plan to the public for discussion and input.

PROPOSED DISABLED FARE RESTORATION

The Detroit Department of Transportation is the largest transit provider in the State of Michigan with a fleet of more than 500 coaches traveling 23 million miles each year over 1,300 miles of routes. DDOT operates three light repair garages and terminals as well as a facility for major overhauls.

There are a number of outside forces that have an effect on providing public transportation service to Detroit area residents. The sluggish economy, state funding cuts, rising fuel costs, and the exploding costs of healthcare and pensions are having a major impact on DDOT and well as other City departments. The Mayor has mandated that all City departments become more effective and more efficient.

To meet this challenge, DDOT will:

- Develop a service plan
- Eliminate overtime costs
- Increase training
- Institute a preventative maintenance program
- Realign staff
- Restore a discounted disabled fare rate

The discounted disabled fare is not new to the transit industry. Transit agencies in every major city – including the SMART system – charge a reduced rate for disabled passengers.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires transit agencies to allow persons with a Medicare card to ride for half fare during off peak hours. Most persons with a Medicare card are individuals (or their spouse) who have worked ten years in Medicare covered employment (payroll taxes were deducted), are 65 years or older, and are United States citizens or permanent residents. Younger people with a disability or chronic kidney disease may also qualify for Medicare.

Because many transit dependent riders, with disabilities, do not qualify for Medicare, transit agencies across the country have instituted their own fare programs for the disabled.

DDOT is proposing to restore a Disabled Fare Program in accordance with FTA guidelines. The proposed fare for disabled passengers would be half of the regular adult fare (when a Medicare and State issued identification are presented to the bus driver). If a Disabled Fare Program is approved, the new fare charge will become effective thirty (30) days after City Council approval.

DDOT will continue efforts to increase efficiency in the current special fares program by improving processes and procedures. A new application is currently under development and new cards may be issued. DDOT will stop accepting applications for the current special fares card on June 30, 2004. If the Proposed Disabled Fare Program (under which disabled passengers will be charged half fare) is not approved, DDOT will still proceed with instituting an improved Disabled Fare Program. The current special fare card may be used as an approved DDOT identification card until December 31, 2004.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The mission of the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) is to provide the residents of greater Detroit with the highest possible quality public transit service in a cost effective, safe and user friendly manner that maintains and attracts residents, businesses and visitors to the city, thereby benefitting the city's economic vitality.

Why Public Involvement is Necessary

Public involvement is mandated by the Federal, State, and City government. Public involvement helps to guide department decisions in providing public transportation services. It is a benefit to the department and the public, because it allows the development of service that meets the needs of the citizens.

When Public Involvement is Necessary

Federal mandates require public involvement prior to raising fares, implementing major reductions in service, or applying for grants/loans to finance transportation improvement projects. Public input is also required before establishing a new route or eliminating an existing one.

State requirements dictate the establishment of a Local Advisory Council (LAC) for the disabled and elderly. The purpose of the LAC is to provide input into DDOT's accessibility planning, as outlined in the State's Public Act 51.

Local policy involves receiving comments, complaints, and commendations from the public on day to day service.

How The Public Is Included In The Process.

The public is included in the planning process through informational meetings, public hearings, community meetings, and surveys. DDOT works through a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to solicit public response on major projects. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) is that MPO. SEMCOG incorporates DDOT projects into the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). An annual agreement between SEMCOG and the planning partners define the responsibilities and procedures to carry out the cooperative planning process. Both bodies within the SEMCOG structure review, discuss, comment and recommend actions relevant to transportation planning on transit projects. Public comment is ongoing and is received through public hearings, letters, phone calls and e-mails.

Public comment and discussion are received through DDOT scheduled Customer Information Meetings, Public Hearings, Advisory Commission Meetings, the Local Advisory Council, and other community meetings (i.e. police precinct meetings).

What Level Of Participation/Involvement Is Appropriate

There are two basic forms of public involvement: 1) Public Participation - where public input/feedback is sought; and 2) Public Information/education - where information is disseminated to the public.

DDOT seeks public input not only because it is required by government regulations, but also to put the best services possible into effect.. There are other times when it is necessary to provide information only. Informational meetings may be held to notify the public of changes in policy or other services which do not fall under government requirements. Occasionally, administrative decisions are made that do not require public approval.

Which Public Should be Involved

Public involvement includes a variety of stakeholders. DDOT seeks to involve:

- Non-riders
- Business and community leaders/groups
- Government officials
- Faith based community
- Academia and educational institutions
- Detroit City Council
- Mayor and Executive Cabinet
- Other City Departments
- DDOT employees

It is important to involve as many individuals and/or groups as possible to gain the support and development of public transportation.

The overall goals of the plan are:

1. To inform/educate the general public about DDOT programs and the benefits of public transit.
2. To develop and implement activities designed to engage the public's participation to support DDOT's planning criteria and strategies.
3. To receive and process feedback for DDOT projects from all stakeholders.
4. To enlist representatives from DDOT's key stakeholders to form partnerships for consensus building.

Goal No. 1

To inform/educate the general public about DDOT programs and the benefits of public transit.

Objective: To provide the public with the opportunity to ask questions, make comments and to meet directly with the DDOT administrators through Customer Information Meetings and the Local Advisory Council for the disabled and elderly; and also to disseminate information on programs and projects.

Actions:

- Develop and distribute meeting notices to Neighborhood City Halls and libraries
- Select meeting location(s)
- Contact DDOT administrators for agenda input,
- Post meeting notices on DDOT's Website, and Government Access Channel 10 and DDOT buses
- Provide a Court Reporter to record the Minutes of meetings
- Contact the Detroit Cable Commission to video record as needed
- Provide special needs services upon request (Braille, interpreter, etc.)
- Develop and produce handout materials

Measures: VHS tapes of meetings, customer participation, request to speak forms

Deadline:

Customer Information Meetings are held the third Thursday of every month.

The Local Advisory Council meetings are held on the third Tuesday every other month for January, March, May, July, September and November. Other meetings may be scheduled on an as needed basis.

Budget: Refreshments \$50.00 per meeting

Goal No. 2

To develop and implement activities designed to engage the public's participation to support DDOT's planning criteria and strategies.

Objective: To conduct Public Hearings, in accordance to DDOT's Public Hearing Policy and Procedure, see page twelve (12).

Actions:

- Secure meeting locations
- Prepare public notice for publication in local newspapers
- Purchase advertisement for public notice
- Prepare hearing booklet
- Distribute hearing booklet to specified locations
- Provide a Court Reporter to record Minutes
- Provide special needs services upon request (Braille, interpreter, etc.)
- Prepare a response to public input
- Hold annual public hearing to present Federal grant and loan applications

Deadline:

Public hearings are scheduled as needed with the annual public hearing in September.

Budget: \$2,000.00 annually

Goal No. 3

To receive and process feedback for DDOT projects.

Objective: To participate in outreach activities, provide information, and solicit response from the public on various projects and services.

Actions:

- Participate in community events
- Participate with the Mayors Community Outreach Service Team (COST) to conduct site visits at Senior Citizen facilities
- Reinstitute Transit Education
- Participate in Public Schools Career Day
- Hold Special Events
- Attend meetings at police precincts

Measures: Surveys

Deadline:

Community outreach activities are ongoing and occur throughout the year.

Budget:

Promotional Items \$20,000.00 annually

Goal No. 4

To enlist representatives from DDOT's key stakeholders to form partnerships for consensus building

Objective: To improve community relations with the public and to include all groups in the decision-making process.

Actions:

- Develop a partnership agreement with key stakeholder groups
- Extend invitations to advocacy groups, community-based organizations, governmental agencies, businesses, contractors, schools, educational institutions to form alliances
- Conduct focus groups to solicit ideas
- Conduct surveys
- Collect feedback forms
- Establish partnerships with key stakeholders
- Develop a mailing list of community groups to distribute DDOT materials

Measures: Direct mailing list, surveys, partnership agreement

Deadline: Beginning July 1, 2004 and ongoing

Budget: \$2,000.00 annually

PUBLIC HEARING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) will schedule public hearings as needed to solicit comments from its stakeholders at open public forums. Public hearing schedules, notification and implementation shall follow the policies and procedures as indicated in this document.

Public hearings are required as follows:

Prior to raising fares or implementing a major reduction of transit service.
(Federal Transit Act. Section 9 (e) (3) (H))

If there is any reduction in service of 25 percent or more of the number of transit route miles of a route, or 25 percent or more of the number of transit revenue vehicle miles of a route computed on a daily basis for the day of the week for which the change is made.

When a new transit route is established.

Before eliminating an existing transit route.

Prior to any application for a grant or loan under the Federal Transit Act to finance the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or improvement of facilities or equipment which will substantially affect a community or its mass transportation service, DDOT shall afford an adequate opportunity for a public hearing, pursuant to adequate public notice, and hold such hearing unless no one with a significant economic, social, or environmental interest in the matter requests a hearing. (Federal Transit Act. Section 3 (d) (1))

Exemptions:

If reduced or free promotional fares are instituted on a daily basis or periodically within a period of 180 days.

If an emergency situation occurs, a service change may be implemented immediately. Examples of emergency service changes include but are not limited to those made because of a power failure for a fixed-guideway system, the collapse of a bridge over which bus routes pass, major road or rail construction of inadequate supplies of fuel, etc.

Experimental service changes instituted for 180 days, or less.

For headway adjustments of up to five (5) minutes during peak hour service and up to (fifteen) 15 minutes during non-peak hour service.

Standard seasonal variations are exempt unless the number, timing or type of standard seasonal variation change.

LOCATION

The following criteria will be used to determine the location(s) for public hearing(s):

Public hearings will be held in DDOT's service area, near or close to bus services. The public hearing(s) will be conducted in the morning, afternoon or evening at a designated time as determined by DDOT management.

Public hearings will be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Public hearing sites should be available for use at no or minimal charge to DDOT.

NOTIFICATION

The public shall be notified of the public hearing through the following methods:

Legal notices of scheduled public hearings shall be placed not more than ten (10) business days nor less than five (5) business days prior to the hearing in a newspaper of the legal community (e.g. Legal News), general circulation (e.g. Detroit Sunday Journal, Detroit Free Press) and also published in newspapers oriented to specific groups or neighborhoods that may be affected (e.g. Michigan Chronicle).

Press releases may be sent to newspapers, radio and/or television stations.

Notice must contain:

Description of proposed service changes or fare changes:

Time and place of hearing(s):

A paragraph indicating that written statements and phone calls concerning the hearing topic will be accepted at the Detroit Department of Transportation, Grants/ Planning & Marketing Division, 1301 E. Warren, Detroit, MI 48207, (313) 933-1300 until 4:00 p.m. on the date of the hearing. All comments received by the hearing date will be read into the proceedings.

A paragraph explaining that materials in accessible formats for persons with disabilities will be furnished upon request before the public hearing. All requests for special assistance should be directed to Detroit Department of Transportation, Grants/Planning & Marketing, 1301 E. Warren, Detroit, MI 48207 or by calling (313) 833-7693; a sign language interpreter can be made available if needed, but a request for special assistance, including interpreter must be made at least seven (7) days prior to the hearing.

Locations where documents could be reviewed prior to hearing.

CONDUCTING A HEARING

The following are the rules to conduct all public hearings held by the Detroit Department of Transportation:

1. Individuals may appear and speak for themselves, or, if duly authorized, for any local government, civic group, organization, club, or association, subject to all the rules provided herein.
2. All persons desiring to be heard must register with the official presiding over the hearing (or his/her designated representative). Speakers will be heard in the order in which they register.
3. Speakers are encouraged to make their statements brief and concise and, where possible, to summarize and furnish the full text of their statements in writing. Each speaker will be allowed five (5) minutes within which to make her/her oral presentation and must relinquish the floor to the next speaker at the end of the five (5) minutes period. Any speaker desiring additional time may request some from the presiding official, but such additional time, if granted, will be allowed only after all remaining speakers have been heard.
4. Relinquishing of time by one speaker to another will not be allowed.
5. Additional prepared statements, literature or comments may be submitted in writing at the hearings. Any prepared statements forwarded to DDOT during the public comment period will also be entered into the hearing proceedings as a matter of public record.
6. All statements, oral or written, must be directed to the Chair and must be pertinent to the subject matter under consideration.
7. Speakers will be allowed the opportunity to use their time, with the time limitations provided, to their best advantage without interruption.
8. Each person speaking or asking questions must do so from the rostrum or other designated place. This is necessary for accurate stenographic transcriptions and tape recordings of the hearing.

PRINTED MATERIALS/SERVICES FOR PUBLIC HEARING

Copies of document for review

Agenda

Rules for conducting a public hearing

Public Hearing Comment Form

Speaker's sign-in card

Sign-in sheet

Court Reporter

Sign interpreter (if requested)

PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS

Call to order

State time and introduce public transit hearing/moderator

Introduce other public transit official(s) if present

Describe public hearing process prior to and during meeting opening, and comment on forms being passed out.

Speaker sign-in card passed out

Public comments given in order of receipt of cards only. Written and oral comments acceptable. Only individuals who complete and turn in a speaker card may speak.

Public hearing is adjourned.

If no public arrives by fifteen (15) minutes past the scheduled hour of the hearing, the meeting is adjourned.

SERVICE CHANGES

Adjournment of the hearing may occur fifteen (15) minutes past the scheduled meeting time if no public arrives:

Any individual may appear and speak representing himself or as an authorized organization representative;

Persons desiring to be heard must register;

Speakers will be heard in the order registered;

Brief, concise statements are encouraged. Written full text oral statements are also encouraged;

Five (5) minutes is allowed for oral presentation; additional time granted only after remaining speakers have been heard

Legal Notices

Detroit Legal News

Doug or Mitch Phone: (313) 961-3949 Fax: (313) 961-7817

Two (2) days notice by 5:00 p.m.

Michigan Chronicle

Mildred Webb Phone: (313) 963-5522

Deadline 12:00 p.m. Friday

Detroit News

Tamika Key Phone: (313) 223-3242

Deadline: Three (3) days notice by 5:00 p.m.

Submit text of notices along with publication dates to DDOT's Purchasing Division who will place the ads. Request tear sheets after publication.

DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION (Coordinator of Public Hearings)

Detroit Department of Transportation, 1301 E. Warren, Human Resources Office

Municipal Reference Library, 1004 City-County Building

Detroit Public Library, all branches

Main Library Tip Service (313) 833-4007

Call in advance to notify and to make arrangements for special, speedy delivery to the branches by the target date. Call again to notify of exactly when the document will be delivered to the office. Request also that the Municipal Reference Library receives two (2) copies - deliver 28 copies and 60 flyers.

Detroit Neighborhood City Halls

Raymond Cheeks - Administration

(313) 224-3450

Call in advance to notify him and to make special arrangements for distribution to the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center by the target date. Deliver 10 copies and 25 flyers.

Community-Based Organizations

- Delivery by U.S. Mail with cover letter of instruction. Send one (1) document and 5 flyers.
- Call Plant Maintenance to arrange delivery of document to designated sites.
- Documents to be distributed internally two (2) to all Division Heads and thirty-five (35) to Road Supervisors. Balance to be made available to the public at the hearings and at the Guards' Desk on the first floor of the DDOT Administration Building.
- Document Development - Manager, Grants/Planning & Marketing or designee
- Collect data from Scheduling Manager or DDOT's Detroit Metrolift Manager. Write descriptive narrative. Graphic Artist to provide maps or illustrations as needed. Final document to be given to Print Shop for production and distribution of 250 copies. Distribution list with quantities to be given to Print Shop.